Winter Walk

by Kunie Sakai

http://presencedear.com

Scanner: Karasik

Translator: PresenceDear

Editor: Mahchan

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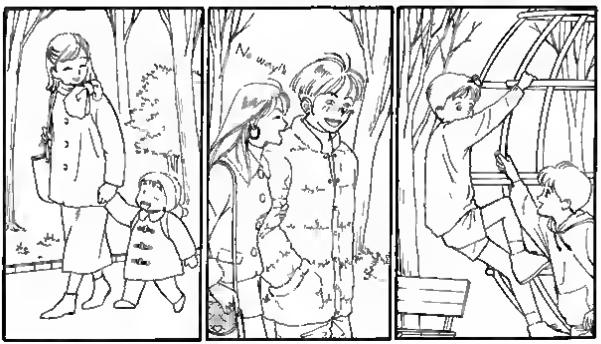
Winter Walk

I'M SORRY
I WASN'T GOING TO CALL YOU ANYMORE, BUT...
IT'S ME, SHUUHEI
TANIGUCHI-SAN?
...CAN WE GET TO-GETHER THIS EVENING?
I'VE GOT SOMETHING IMPORTANT TO TELL YOU
YOU'LL HAVE TO WAIT MY COMPANY IS THROWING ME A GOING AWAY PARTY TONIGHT...
WELL, WHENEVER YOU CAN MAKE IT...
I'LL BE WAITING IN THE PARK
CLICK
SHUUHEI...

beep
beep
beep

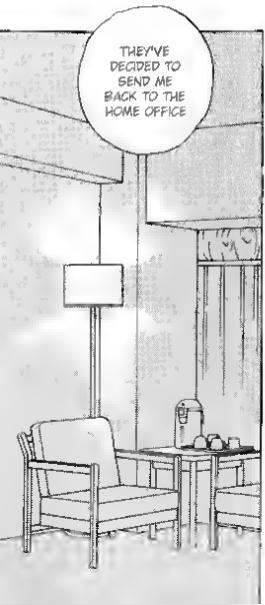
YEAH I BET YOU'RE BUSY, GETTING READY TO GO BACK TO TOKYO
YOU SOUNDED ANNOYED

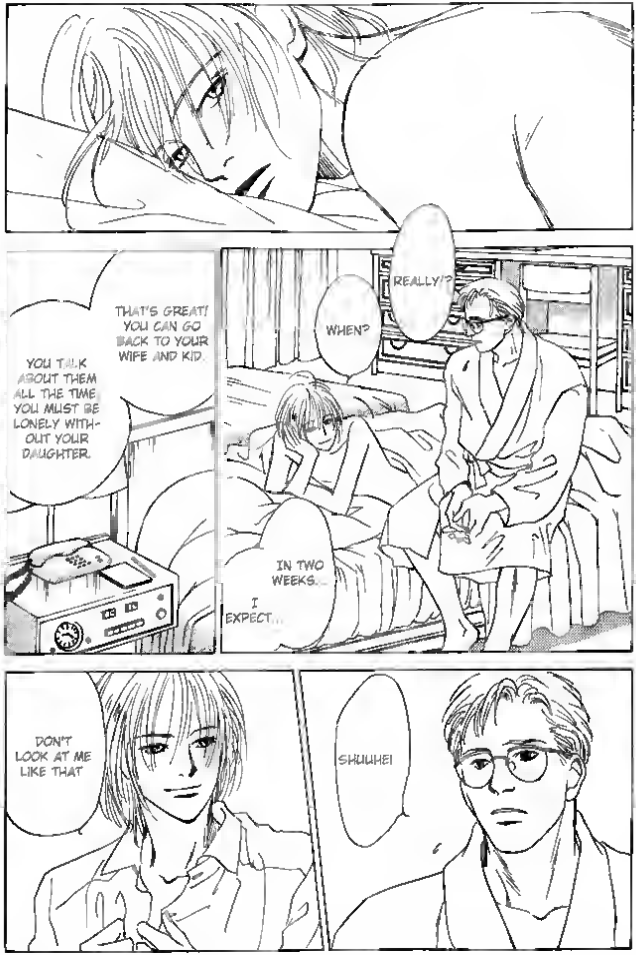
NO MATTER WHAT
BUT I'VE GOT TO SPEAK TO YOU
I'D LIKE TO WALK AWAY WITHOUT SEEING YOU, TOO

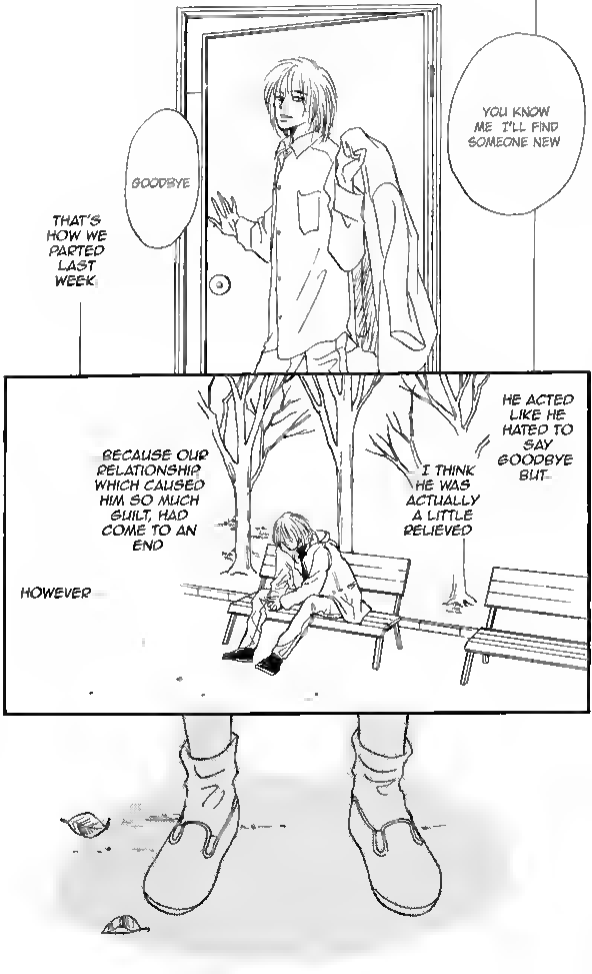


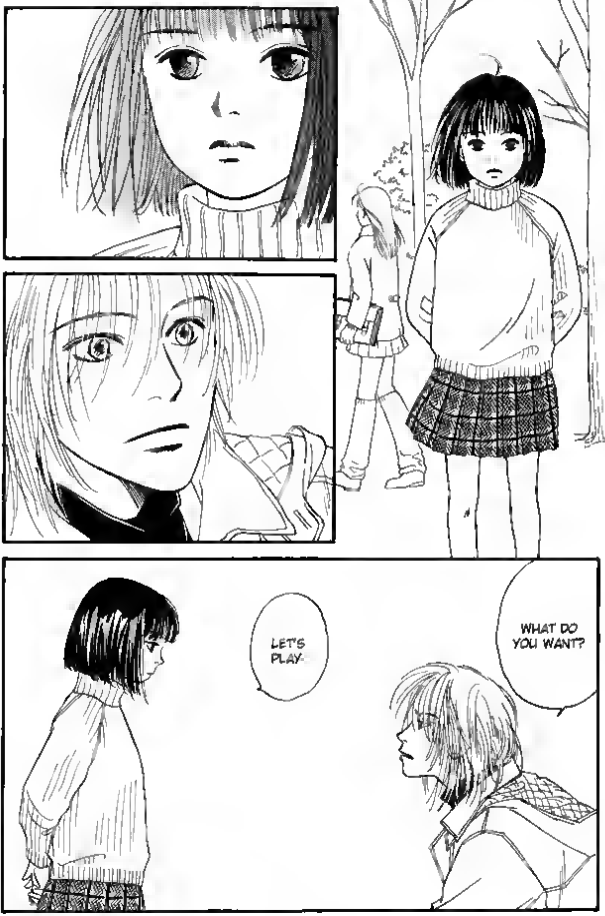
LIKE THEIR CURRENT HAPPINESS WILL LAST FOREVER?

WHY IS EVERYONE SMILING LIKE NOTHING IS WRONG?

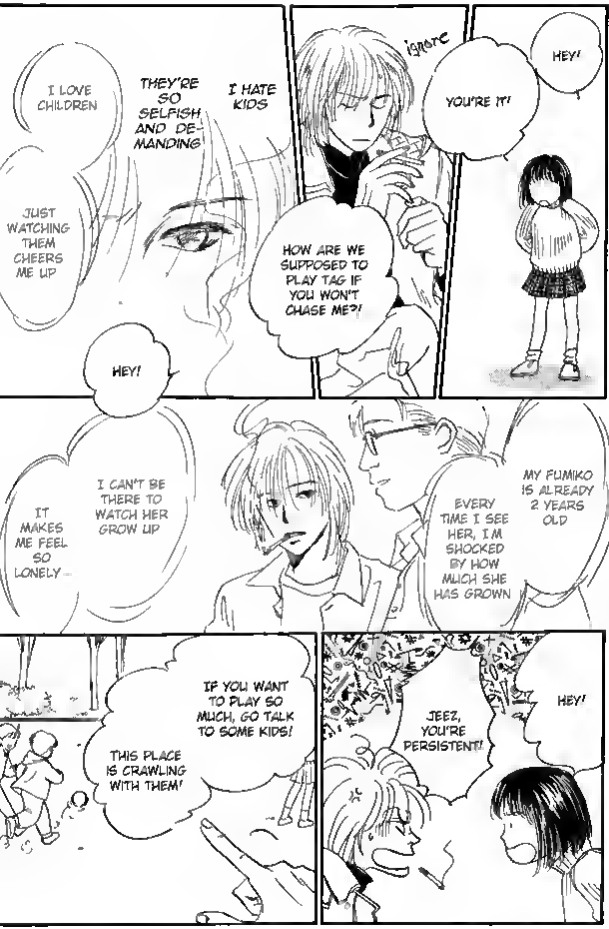



REALLY!?
WHEN?
IN TWO WEEKS... I EXPECT...
THAT'S GREAT! YOU CAN GO BACK TO YOUR WIFE AND KID.
YOU TALK ABOUT THEM ALL THE TIME. YOU MUST BE LONELY WITHOUT YOUR DAUGHTER.
SHUUHE!
DON'T LOOK AT ME LIKE THAT


THAT'S HOW WE PARTED LAST WEEK
GOODBYE
YOU KNOW ME I'LL FIND SOMEONE NEW
HOWEVER
BECAUSE OUR RELATIONSHIP WHICH CAUSED HIM SO MUCH GUILT, HAD COME TO AN END
I THINK HE WAS ACTUALLY A LITTLE RELIEVED
HE ACTED LIKE HE HATED TO SAY GOODBYE BUT


LET'S PLAY.
WHAT DO YOU WANT?

COME ON, MR. IT!
YOU'RE IT!
HUH?
H-HEY...!
TURN
THIS IS CRAZY!
WHAT THE HELL AM I DOING?
Uh...


I LOVE CHILDREN
JUST WATCHING THEM CHEERS ME UP
THEY'RE SO SELFISH AND DEMANDING
I HATE KIDS
HOW ARE WE SUPPOSED TO PLAY TAG IF YOU WON'T CHASE ME?!
IGNORE
YOU'RE IT!
HEY!
HEY!
IT MAKES ME FEEL SO LONELY
I CAN'T BE THERE TO WATCH HER GROW UP
EVERY TIME I SEE HER, I'M SHOCKED BY HOW MUCH SHE HAS GROWN
MY FUMIKO IS ALREADY 2 YEARS OLD
THIS PLACE IS CRAWLING WITH THEM!
IF YOU WANT TO PLAY SO MUCH, GO TALK TO SOME KIDS!
JEEZ, YOU'RE PERSISTENT!
HEY!

NOBODY WILL PLAY WITH ME
OH I SEE
SHE'S AN OUTCAST
CHILDREN ARE SAVAGE AND CRUEL ONCE THEY'VE CHOSEN A TARGET, THEY SHOW NO MERCY
THEY ATTACK FIERCELY, OR GIVE THE COLD SHOULDER, OR, POSSIBLY, BOSS SOMEONE AROUND

KURIN BEER
BUT, OH, WELL...
IT'S NOT MY PROBLEM
urg
ARE YOU DRINKING IN THE MIDDLE OF THE DAY?
YOU AGAIN!
WHY ARE YOU FOLLOWING ME?
KURIN BEER
CAN I HAVE A LITTLE TOO? IT'S COLD OUT
MY FATHER USED TO DRINK A LOT, TOO
HE SAID IT WARMED HIM UP.
THAT'S WHY HE WAS IN THE HOSPITAL SO OFTEN
YOU DON'T HAVE GOOD PARENTS, EITHER.

Winter Walk

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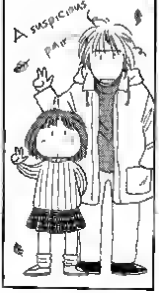
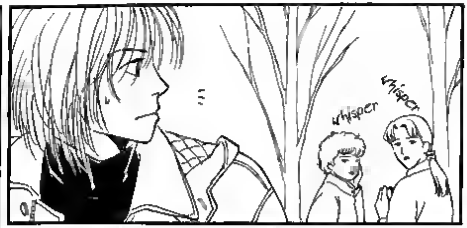
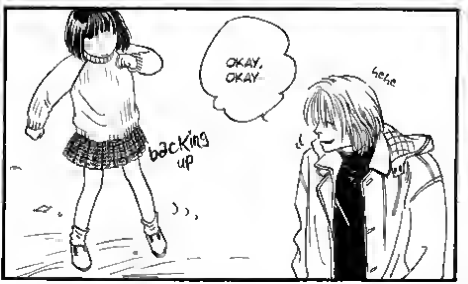
Well, I put "Winter Walk" in here, but it's not a comedy. It's dark. And plain. I didn't have a lot of time so the drawings are sparse... but, for some reason I like it. Maybe because the main character is miserable...

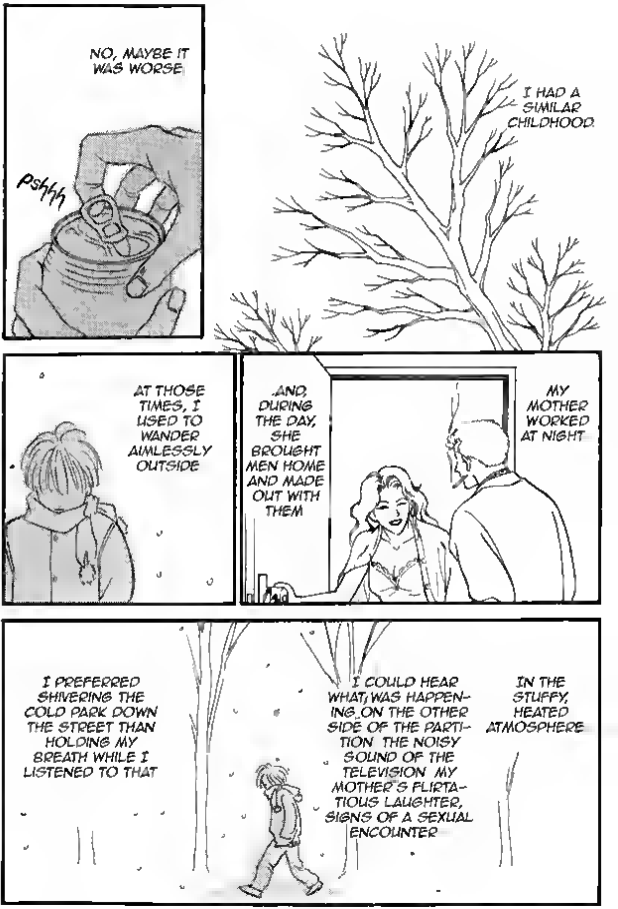
Lately, I've noticed that, when I make my main character a man he's invariably suffering from some kind of misfortune. Hmm... Well, at any rate, this main character, Shouhei-kun, isn't gorgeous but his freckles are cute. By the way, I like girls with a bob, too.







THAT WAS COLD, BUT WHAT CHOICE DID I HAVE
I CAN TELL THAT YOU'RE A DISADVANTAGED CHILD.
BUT UNFORTUNATELY I'VE GOT MY HANDS FULL WITH MY OWN BUSINESS.
IF YOU'VE GOT A PROBLEM, GO TALK TO A TEACHER AT SCHOOL OR SOMEONE FROM SOCIAL SERVICES.
OKAY?


NO, MAYBE IT WAS WORSE
PSHHH
I HAD A SIMILAR CHILDHOOD
AT THOSE TIMES, I USED TO WANDER AIMLESSLY OUTSIDE
AND, DURING THE DAY, SHE BROUGHT MEN HOME AND MADE OUT WITH THEM
MY MOTHER WORKED AT NIGHT
I PREFERRED SHIVERING THE COLD PARK DOWN THE STREET THAN HOLDING MY BREATH WHILE I LISTENED TO THAT
I COULD HEAR WHAT WAS HAPPENING ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE PARTITION THE NOISY SOUND OF THE TELEVISION MY MOTHER'S FLIRTATIOUS LAUGHTER, SIGNS OF A SEXUAL ENCOUNTER
IN THE STUFFY, HEATED ATMOSPHERE

I GUESS THAT'S THE ONLY THING WE HAVE IN COMMON
MY MOTHER WAS THE KIND OF WOMAN WHO COULDN'T LIVE WITHOUT A MAN
I'D NEVER BEEN GOOD AT RELATIONSHIPS, BUT I HAD OVERWHELMING PHYSICAL NEEDS
WHEN I THINK ABOUT IT, I'VE SLEPT WITH A LOT OF MEN
NO, IT'S NOT LIKE THAT.
I JUST NEVER HAD THE COURAGE TO ACT ON IT!
YOU WEREN'T AWARE OF YOUR SEXUAL ORIENTATION?
REALLY?
THIS IS YOUR FIRST TIME WITH A MAN?
AND THEN I MET HIM
Old Crow

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It's late in the game but I guess I'm wondering if I like to draw gay people (whether I draw them decently or not) I guess I do (I've accepted it) I can't help it After all I only draw things I like things that interest me or things I enjoying drawing I just discovered that...

Oh! But just to be safe it's not like I'm only interested in gay people The next thing I feel like drawing could be anything...

What should I draw? Somebody tell me Just kidding

HE WAS JUST AN ORDINARY BUSINESSMAN, THE KIND YOU MEET EVERY DAY, BUT...

FOR SOME REASON, THIS GUY, TANIGUCHI-SAN, WAS DIFFERENT FROM THE MEN I'D KNOWN BEFORE

...TO ME, HE WAS SOMEONE SPECIAL

HE GAVE ME WHAT I'D NEVER RECEIVED AS A CHILD

HERE YOU NEED TO KEEP WARM

MAYBE YOU HAVE A COLD

YOU SEEM A LITTLE FEVERISH, SHUUHEI

MAYBE THAT'S BECAUSE...

...MY CHEST HURT WHEN HE WAS KIND TO ME LIKE THAT

AND YET...

I KNOW I'LL BUY SOME CANNED PEACHES

FUMIKO ALWAYS EATS PEACHES WHEN SHE CATCHES A COLD

BUT HE NEVER GOT ANGRY AT ME HE NEVER LOOKED AT ME WITH COLD EYES
I WANTED TO SEE HIM LOOK CONCERNED, SO I SAID MEAN AND SELFISH THINGS
HE'S STILL NOT HERE
MAYBE HE'S NOT GONNA COME
WHAT IF HE JUST WENT BACK TO TOKYO WITHOUT SEEING ME?
ARE YOU FEELING SICK?

SHE'S BACK...?
ARE YOU OKAY?
DO YOU HAVE HEADACHE?
DON'T TOUCH ME!
I KNOW A SPELL
...THAT WILL MAKE YOU FEEL BETTER.
"PAIN, PAIN..."
"FLY AWAY..."
STOP IT!
swat

"YOUR TEST RESULTS WERE POSITIVE."

THE WAY THE DOCTOR WAS LOOKING AT ME WHILE HE SPOKE...

"DON'T BE PESSIMISTIC."

"LET ME GIVE YOU A REFERRAL

THEY'LL KNOW WHAT TREATMENT TO GIVE YOU IN A MORE STATE-OF-THE-ART HOSPITAL

"DO YOU KNOW WHERE YOU GOT THE INFECTION?"

...I'M REALLY SCARED.

AND...

WHAT'S GOING TO HAPPEN TO ME AFTER THIS?

BUT...

I'M USED TO PEOPLE LOOKING AT ME LIKE THAT

I'VE GOT TO TELL HIM RIGHT AWAY

WHAT IF I GAVE THE INFECTION TO HIM?

WHAT IF IT'S MY FAULT...?

RIGHT AWAY...

I WONDER HOW HE WILL LOOK AT ME?
OH

IT'S SNOWING!
YAY!
I WONDER IF IT WILL STICK!
HE'S NOT HERE YET.
HEY
IT'S DARK NOW.
COME ON YOU SHOULD GO HOME
WHY NOT?
I DON'T KNOW.
I CAN'T GO HOME
DON'T BE SILLY
gulp

HOLD IT
THERE'S SOMETHING STRANGE GOING ON HERE
I'M COMPLETELY FINE!
AREN'T YOU...
...COLD?
THE OUTFIT YOU'RE WEARING IS...
EVEN THOUGH I'M WEARING A COAT, I'M FREEZING.
HOW CAN SHE BE FINE?
MAYBE SHE CAN PUT UP WITH A LOT
YOU KNOW, I JUST REMEMBERED A HORRIBLE STORY
OR
IT HAPPENED A LONG TIME AGO, RIGHT HERE IN THIS PARK
YOU...
WHAT IN THE WORLD...?
HEY, YOU! WHAT ARE YOU DOING?

UH...
WHAT KID?
HM...?
WELL... UH...
SEE, THIS KID
KID?

HAVE YOU BEEN DRINKING?
QUIT MESSING WITH ME
WELL, WHATEVER
JUST HURRY UP AND GO HOME
I...
I DON'T UNDERSTAND

TELL ME
WHY CAN'T ANYONE SEE ME?
IT'S STRANGE
WITH YOU I CAN HOLD YOUR HAND, LIKE THIS
OH— I SEE
OR AM I DREAMING?
TELL ME
CAN YOU FEEL MY HAND?

THIS CHILD...
YOUR HAND IS COLD...
YEAH...
I JUST FIGURED IT OUT.
"A LONG TIME AGO, RIGHT HERE IN THIS PARK, AN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL GIRL WAS MURDERED."
"HMM..."
"IT SEEMS SHE WAS KIDNAPPED BY SOME PERVERT."
"SHE WAS JUST 9 YEARS OLD."
"RIGHT
IT GIVES ME CHILLS TO THINK ABOUT IT."
"FUMIKO-CHAN RIGHT?"
"SHE HAD THE SAME NAME AS MY DAUGHTER."

SAD...

FUMI
...YOUR NAME?
WHAT'S...
I DON'T KNOW
HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN HERE?
YEAH
HAVE YOU...
...BEEN ALONE ALL THIS TIME?

I SEE...
THEN...
...YOU WERE LONELY.
YOU WERE LONELY, TOO.
BUT IT'S OKAY NOW.
I SEE...
NOW I UNDERSTAND...
...WHY THIS CHILD APPROACHED ME.
I'LL STAY WITH YOU

YOU HEARD THE WORDS I COULD NEVER SAY
"I'M LONELY."
"I WANT SOME-ONE BY MY SIDE."
"I'M LONELY. I'M LONELY. I'M LONELY."
HEY...
IT'S NOT COLD ANY MORE.
ARE YOU STILL LONELY?
YEAH.
NO...

I DON'T NEED TO ASK...
WHERE?
LET'S GO.
IT DOESN'T SEEM SO BAD
IF I CAN DO LIKE THIS...
SOMEHOW, I GET THE FEELING I'VE FORGOTTEN SOMETHING VERY IMPORTANT
BUT...

SHUUHE!!
THAT VOICE !
HE CAME.
TANIGU-CHI-SA...
Ah!

SHUUHE!!
TANIGUCHI-SAN...
I THOUGHT YOU'D FROZEN TO DEATH
TAKING OFF YOUR COAT AND FALLING ASLEEP IN A PLACE LIKE THIS--!
WHY WOULD YOU DO SOMETHING SO FOOLISH?!
FUM!
HUH?
GET AHOLD OF YOURSELF!
ARE YOU OKAY?

TANIGU-CHI
CLUTCH
I GOT TESTED
HUH?
I'M ...HIV POSITIVE
I ...HAVE AIDS
let go

I'M SORRY...
I'M SORRY.
YOU WERE SO KIND TO ME.
I'M SORRY. I'VE BEEN NOTHING BUT TROUBLE.
I'M SORRY, FUMI...
YOU'VE BEEN WAITING FOR SOMEONE TO TAKE YOUR HAND.
BUT I CAN'T GO WITH YOU.
I'M SORRY
I'LL GO BY MYSELF
I KNOW... YOU CAN'T HELP IT
SHUUHE!
WERE YOU WAITING TO TELL ME... ALL THIS TIME?

I WAS HAPPY WHEN YOU GAVE ME YOUR COAT...
THANK YOU...

AFTER TANIGUCHI RETURNED TO TOKYO, I RECEIVED A LETTER FROM HIM.

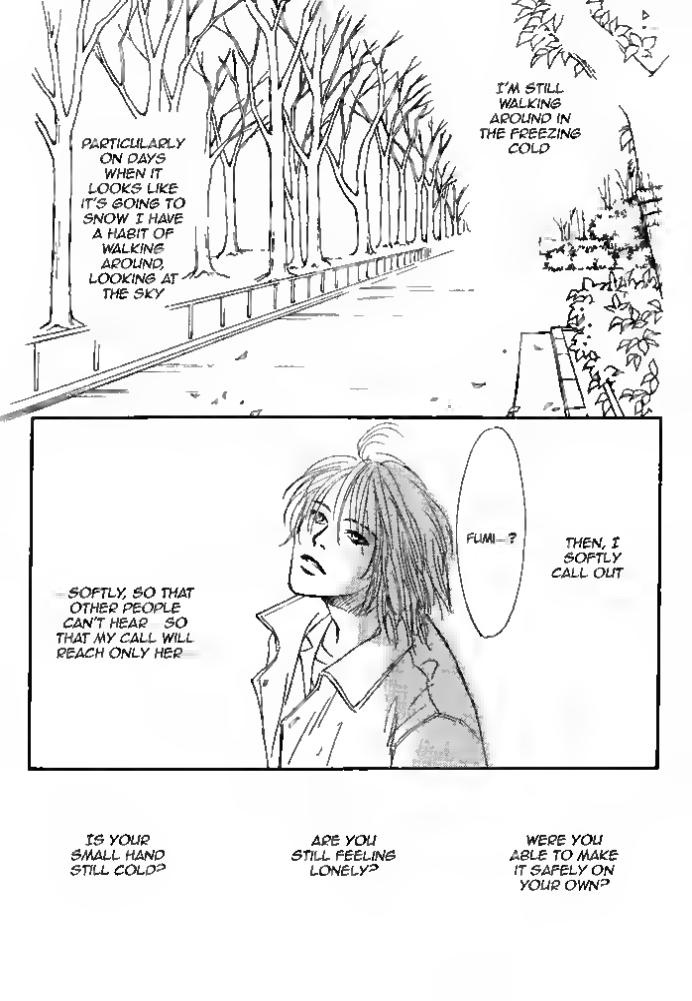
HIS TEST RESULTS WERE NEGATIVE

I GAVE THANKS TO GOD FOR THE FIRST TIME.

I GOT A LOT OF LETTERS FROM TANIGUCHI AFTER THAT, BUT I NEVER SENT A REPLY

A YEAR HAS PASSED SINCE THEN

FOR THE TIME BEING, I'M STILL ALIVE


PARTICULARLY ON DAYS WHEN IT LOOKS LIKE IT'S GOING TO SNOW I HAVE A HABIT OF WALKING AROUND, LOOKING AT THE SKY
I'M STILL WALKING AROUND IN THE FREEZING COLD
SOFTLY, SO THAT OTHER PEOPLE CAN'T HEAR SO THAT MY CALL WILL REACH ONLY HER
FUMI—?
THEN, I SOFTLY CALL OUT
IS YOUR SMALL HAND STILL COLD?
ARE YOU STILL FEELING LONELY?
WERE YOU ABLE TO MAKE IT SAFELY ON YOUR OWN?

IT'LL BE OKAY

WE'LL MEET AGAIN SOON

AND THIS TIME, I WON'T LET GO OF YOUR HAND

Winter Walk - End